



## Recognizing and Managing Arthritis in Pets

Did you know that pets can suffer from arthritis just like people? May is **Arthritis Awareness Month**, and it's the perfect time to shine a light on this common but often overlooked condition. Arthritis can significantly impact your pet's comfort, mobility, and overall quality of life—but with proper care, there's a lot we can do to help them stay active and happy.

### What Is Arthritis in Pets?

Arthritis is a degenerative joint condition that leads to inflammation, pain, and stiffness. The most common form is **osteoarthritis**, which occurs when the cartilage that cushions the joints wears down over time. While arthritis is more common in senior pets, it can also affect younger animals—especially those who are overweight or predisposed due to breed or previous injuries.

Dogs and cats can both suffer from arthritis, although cats are especially good at hiding their discomfort. That's why understanding the signs is so important.

### Signs Your Pet Might Have Arthritis

Because pets can't tell us when they're hurting, it's up to us to notice the more subtle signs of joint pain. If your pet is showing any of the following behaviors, it might be time for a checkup:

- Hesitating or struggling to jump, climb stairs, or get into the car

- Stiffness or limping, especially after sleeping or resting
- Decreased interest in playing or going for walks
- Avoiding being touched in certain areas
- Changes in posture, behavior, or energy levels

The earlier we recognize arthritis, the sooner we can intervene to help your pet stay mobile and comfortable.

## Diagnosing Arthritis

If you suspect arthritis, the first step is to schedule an appointment with your veterinarian. During the exam, we'll assess your pet's mobility, ask about their activity levels, and may recommend imaging—like X-rays—to get a closer look at the joints. Routine wellness exams are key to catching arthritis and other age-related conditions early, even before obvious signs appear.

## Managing Arthritis in Pets

While there's no cure for arthritis, there are many effective ways to manage it and improve your pet's quality of life. Treatment plans are often customized based on your pet's needs, and may include:

- **Medications:** Anti-inflammatory medications and pain relievers can help manage discomfort.
- **Joint Supplements:** Nutraceuticals like glucosamine, chondroitin, and omega-3 fatty acids support joint health.
- **Weight Management:** Keeping your pet at a healthy weight can reduce stress on the joints.
- **Exercise:** Gentle, low-impact activity helps maintain muscle tone and mobility.
- **Physical Therapy:** Rehab exercises and therapies like hydrotherapy can provide relief.
- **Alternative Therapies:** Some pets benefit from laser therapy, acupuncture, or chiropractic care.
- **Home Modifications:** Providing orthopedic beds, ramps, or non-slip rugs can make a big difference in daily comfort.

Managing arthritis is about improving your pet's quality of life and helping them stay active as they age.

## How We Can Help

If you've noticed signs of arthritis or simply want to be proactive about your pet's joint health, we're here for you. Our veterinary team can evaluate your pet's mobility and help create a personalized care plan that supports their comfort and well-being.

**Don't wait until your pet is in visible pain—schedule an appointment today to check in on their joint health.** Together, we can help your pet move more freely and feel better every day.

Awareness and early action are key when it comes to managing arthritis in pets. The sooner we recognize the signs and begin supportive care, the better chance we have at preserving your pet's comfort and mobility.

**May is the perfect time to assess your pet's joint health**—whether they're slowing down with age or simply not moving like they used to.

If you have questions about arthritis or would like to schedule an appointment, we're here to help. Give us a call today to take the next step in supporting your pet's lifelong health and happiness.